

Testimony of Barbara A Rudnick
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Concerning House Bill No. 5798 -An act Prohibiting the Unreasonable Confinement and Tethering of Dogs
Environment Committee, February 9, 2009

Senator Meyer , Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment regarding **House Bill 5798**.

I am a previous member of Friends of Berlin Animal Control and have volunteered many Saturday and Sunday mornings to feed and clean the cages of the animals at the shelter. I also volunteered for the Central Connecticut Cat Project with their spay-neuter program. Currently I am a member of Compassionate Care Animal Center. Our goal is to improve the health and well-being of animals in need and to provide shelter, medical care, and an enriched environment to homeless animals. Until I began my volunteer work many years ago I had no idea how many uncared for and unwanted animals existed.

I have never understood why anyone would get a dog and then for most, or all of its sad life, chain it to a dog house? For several years I witnessed the worst case I had ever seen. Across the street from the church that I am a member, there was a large home. In the yard there were two dogs, a Dalmatian and a mixed breed. There they spent their lives on very short chains, each chained to a dog house. I watched every week as children played ball and ran in the yard, yet not once did I ever see anyone interact with these dogs. It did not matter what the weather was, rain or freezing cold, they were always out there. I did speak with our Animal Control Officer regarding my concerns for these dogs. Unfortunately she informed me that the way the law was written, since they did have shelter, she really did not have the power to do anything. At one point she wrote an article in our town newspaper reminding pet owners how important it was to bring animals in during inclement weather and the freezing cold. At this point, due to my frustration and concern for these poor creatures I cut the article out and left it in the owner's mailbox. I hoped it would help, unfortunately it did not. One week the mixed breed dog was no longer there, which was even sadder because it now left the Dalmatian alone. I watched this dog stare at the house and shiver in the cold. Every week I left mass and cried all the way home. Eventually the Dalmatian was no longer there. I hoped that the owner took the dog in, but I am afraid that after witnessing the weather in which they were left outside that that probably was not the case. To this day I still feel that I should have done more to help these poor dogs.

This is why I am here today. I realize that as human beings we all see the world through different glasses. I can not expect that everyone purchase a special bed for their dog to sleep in or better yet let them sleep with you. This is simply not realistic, but changing the laws so that the suffering I witnessed is no longer acceptable, is.

The changes to this legislation, if passed, will help to improve the lives of many dogs whose life is nothing more that being chained to a dog house hoping that someday someone will stop and play ball with them or possibly even let them come in from the rain and cold.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to share my hopes for this bill and I strongly urge you to support the proposed legislation.